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Sustainable development

Oceans and the law of the sea: oceans and the law of the sea

Draft resolution submitted by the President of the General Assembly

Our ocean, our future: call for action

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 70/303 of 9 September 2016, in which it decided that the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development would be convened at United Nations Headquarters from 5 to 9 June 2017,

1. *Expresses its profound gratitude* to the Governments of Fiji and Sweden for discharging their co-hosting responsibilities by assuming the costs of the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development and its preparatory process and for providing all necessary support;

2. *Endorses* the declaration entitled "Our ocean, our future: call for action" adopted by the Conference, as contained in the annex to the present resolution.

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Annex

Our ocean, our future: call for action

1. We, the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives, meeting in New York from 5 to 9 June 2017 at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the full participation of civil society and other relevant stakeholders, affirm our strong commitment to conserve and sustainably use our oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

2. We are mobilized by a strong conviction that our ocean is critical to our shared future and common humanity in all its diversity. As leaders and representatives of our Governments, we are determined to act decisively and urgently, convinced that our collective action will make a meaningful difference to our people, to our planet and to our prosperity.

3. We recognize that our ocean covers three quarters of our planet, connects our populations and markets and forms an important part of our natural and cultural heritage. It supplies nearly half the oxygen we breathe, absorbs over a quarter of the carbon dioxide we produce, plays a vital role in the water cycle and the climate system and is an important source of our planet's biodiversity and of ecosystem services. It contributes to sustainable development and sustainable ocean-based economies, as well as to poverty eradication, food security and nutrition, maritime trade and transportation, decent work and livelihoods.

4. We are particularly alarmed by the adverse impacts of climate change on the ocean, including the rise in ocean temperatures, ocean and coastal acidification, deoxygenation, sea-level rise, the decrease in polar ice coverage, coastal erosion and extreme weather events. We acknowledge the need to address the adverse impacts that impair the crucial ability of the ocean to act as climate regulator, source of marine biodiversity and as key provider of food and nutrition, tourism and ecosystem services and as an engine for sustainable economic development and growth. We recognize, in this regard, the particular importance of the Paris Agreement, adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

5. We are committed to halting and reversing the decline in the health and productivity of our ocean and its ecosystems and to protecting and restoring its resilience and ecological integrity. We recognize that the well-being of present and future generations is inextricably linked to the health and productivity of our ocean.

6. We underline the integrated and indivisible character of all the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the interlinkages and synergies between them, and reiterate the critical importance of being guided in our work by the 2030 Agenda, including the principles reaffirmed therein. We acknowledge that each country faces specific challenges in its pursuit of sustainable development, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and African States, including coastal ones, as do others recognized in the 2030 Agenda. There are also serious challenges within many middle-income countries.

7. We reiterate our commitment to achieve the targets of Goal 14 within the timelines, and the need to sustain action over the long term, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. We recognize, in particular, the special importance

of certain targets in Goal 14 for small island developing States and least developed countries.

8. We stress the need for an integrated, interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach, as well as enhanced cooperation, coordination and policy coherence, at all levels. We emphasize the critical importance of effective partnerships enabling collective action and reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of Goal 14 with the full participation of all relevant stakeholders.

9. We underline the need to integrate Goal 14 and its interrelated targets into national development plans and strategies, to promote national ownership and to ensure success in its implementation by involving all relevant stakeholders, including national and local authorities, members of parliament, local communities, indigenous peoples, women and youth, as well as the academic and scientific communities, business and industry. We recognize the importance of gender equality and the crucial role of women and youth in the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

10. We stress the importance of enhancing understanding of the health and role of our ocean and the stressors on its ecosystems, including through assessments on the state of the ocean, based on science and on traditional knowledge systems. We also stress the need to further increase marine scientific research to inform and support decision-making, and to promote knowledge hubs and networks to enhance the sharing of scientific data, best practices and know-how.

11. We emphasize that our actions to implement Goal 14 should be in accordance with, reinforce and not duplicate or undermine, existing legal instruments, arrangements, processes, mechanisms or entities. We affirm the need to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of "The future we want".

12. We recognize that the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources require the necessary means of implementation in line with the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and other relevant outcomes, including the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. We stress the importance of the full and timely implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and, in this context, emphasize the need to enhance scientific knowledge and research, enhance capacity-building at all levels, mobilize financial resources from all sources and facilitate the transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to support the implementation of Goal 14 in developing countries.

13. We call on all stakeholders to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development by taking, inter alia, the following actions on an urgent basis, including by building on existing institutions and partnerships:

(a) Approach the implementation of Goal 14 in an integrated and coordinated way and promote policies and actions that take into account the critical interlinkages among the targets of Goal 14, the potential synergies between Goal 14 and the other Goals, particularly those with ocean-related targets, as well as other processes that support the implementation of Goal 14;

(b) Strengthen cooperation, policy coherence and coordination among institutions at all levels, including between and among international organizations,

regional and subregional organizations and institutions, arrangements and programmes;

(c) Strengthen and promote effective and transparent multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, by enhancing engagement of Governments with global, regional and subregional bodies and programmes, the scientific community, the private sector, the donor community, non-governmental organizations, community groups, academic institutions and other relevant actors;

(d) Develop comprehensive strategies to raise awareness of the natural and cultural significance of the ocean, as well as of its state and role, and of the need to further improve knowledge of the ocean, including its importance for sustainable development and how it is impacted by anthropogenic activities;

(e) Support plans to foster ocean-related education, for example as part of education curricula, to promote ocean literacy and a culture of conservation, restoration and sustainable use of our ocean;

(f) Dedicate greater resources to marine scientific research, such as interdisciplinary research and sustained ocean and coastal observation, as well as the collection and sharing of data and knowledge, including traditional knowledge, in order to increase our knowledge of the ocean, to better understand the relationship between climate and the health and productivity of the ocean, to strengthen the development of coordinated early warning systems on extreme weather events and phenomena, and to promote decision-making based on the best available science, to encourage scientific and technological innovation, as well as to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries;

(g) Accelerate actions to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris, plastics and microplastics, nutrient pollution, untreated wastewater, solid waste discharges, hazardous substances, pollution from ships and abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear, as well as to address, as appropriate, the adverse impacts of other human-related activities on the ocean and on marine life, such as ship strikes, underwater noise and invasive alien species;

(h) Promote waste prevention and minimization; develop sustainable consumption and production patterns; adopt the 3Rs — reduce, reuse and recycle — including through incentivizing market-based solutions to reduce waste and its generation, improving mechanisms for environmentally sound waste management, disposal and recycling and developing alternatives such as reusable or recyclable products or products that are biodegradable under natural conditions;

(i) Implement long-term and robust strategies to reduce the use of plastics and microplastics, in particular plastic bags and single-use plastics, including by partnering with stakeholders at relevant levels to address their production, marketing and use;

(j) Support the use of effective and appropriate area-based management tools, including marine protected areas and other integrated, cross-sectoral approaches, including marine spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management, based on best available science, as well as stakeholder engagement and applying the precautionary and ecosystem approaches, consistent with international law and in accordance with national legislation, to enhance ocean resilience and better conserve and sustainably use marine biodiversity;

(k) Develop and implement effective adaptation and mitigation measures that contribute to increasing and supporting resilience to ocean and coastal

acidification, sea-level rise and increase in ocean temperatures, and to addressing the other harmful impacts of climate change on the ocean as well as coastal and blue carbon ecosystems, such as mangroves, tidal marshes, seagrass and coral reefs, and wider interconnected ecosystems impacting on our ocean, and ensure the implementation of relevant obligations and commitments;

(l) Enhance sustainable fisheries management, including to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics, through the implementation of science-based management measures, monitoring, control and enforcement, supporting the consumption of fish sourced from sustainably managed fisheries, and through precautionary and ecosystem approaches as appropriate, as well as strengthening cooperation and coordination, including through, as appropriate, regional fisheries management organizations, bodies and arrangements;

(m) End destructive fishing practices and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, addressing their root causes and holding actors and beneficiaries accountable by taking appropriate actions, so as to deprive them of benefits of such activities, and effectively implementing flag State obligations as well as relevant port State obligations;

(n) Accelerate further work and strengthen cooperation and coordination on the development of interoperable catch documentation schemes and traceability of fish products;

(o) Strengthen capacity-building and technical assistance provided to small-scale and artisanal fishers in developing countries, to enable and enhance their access to marine resources and markets and improve the socioeconomic situation of fishers and fish workers within the context of sustainable fisheries management;

(p) Act decisively to prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, including through accelerating work to complete negotiations at the World Trade Organization on this issue, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of those negotiations;

(q) Support the promotion and strengthening of sustainable ocean-based economies, which, inter alia, build on sustainable activities such as fisheries, tourism, aquaculture, maritime transportation, renewable energies, marine biotechnology and seawater desalination as means to achieve the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, in particular for small island developing States and least developed countries;

(r) Increase efforts to mobilize the means necessary for the development of sustainable ocean-related activities and the implementation of Goal 14, particularly in developing countries, in line with the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other relevant outcomes;

(s) Actively engage in discussions and the exchange of views in the Preparatory Committee established by General Assembly resolution 69/292: Development of an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, so that the General Assembly can, before the end of its seventy-second session, taking into account the report of the Preparatory Committee to the General Assembly, decide on the convening and on the starting date of an intergovernmental conference;

(t) Welcome follow-up on the partnership dialogues and commit to implementing our respective voluntary commitments made in the context of the Conference;

(u) Contribute to the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda by providing an input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development on the implementation of Goal 14, including on opportunities to strengthen progress in the future;

(v) Consider further ways and means to support the timely and effective implementation of Goal 14, taking into account the discussions at the high-level political forum during its first cycle.

14. We strongly call upon the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to support the implementation of Goal 14 in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular by enhancing inter-agency coordination and coherence throughout the United Nations system on ocean issues, taking into consideration the work of UN-Oceans.